For Immediate Release July 11, 2013

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Remarks of Chairwoman Barbara A. Mikulski

July 11, 2013 Full Committee Markup

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Barbara A. Mikulski (D-Md.), Chairwoman of the Appropriations Committee, focused on the importance of a topline of \$1.058 trillion for discretionary spending at today's Full Committee markup of the fiscal year 2014 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies and Legislative Branch bills. She also focused on providing funding for the National Institutes of Health and early childhood education as critical investments for America's future. The following are Chairwoman Mikulski's remarks, as prepared for delivery:

"I am pleased to hold this meeting to mark up the fiscal year 2014 bills for Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and the Legislative Branch. When we finish our markup today we will have completed Committee action on six of our 12 appropriations bills. We've shown that despite our continued disagreement about the topline spending level we are able to work together in a bipartisan way to move our bills forward, in order to move America forward.

"Together, we have reported: Military Construction-VA, by a vote of 23-6; Agriculture, by a vote of 23-6; Transportation and Housing, by a vote of 22-8; and Energy and Water Development, by a vote of 24-6. However, we continue to disagree on our topline funding level. I was dismayed to hear comments recently that we should not even consider Appropriation bills on the Senate Floor until there is a Conference Agreement on the Budget Resolution. But at the same time, six Senators have objected to a conference on the budget resolution, where this problem should be resolved. I will have more to say about this in the coming days. For now, I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, especially our Subcommittee Chairmen and Ranking Members, for working so hard so that we can move our process forward.

"Our beloved former Chairman, Senator Inouye, once said: 'The Defense bill defends America, but it's the Labor-HHS-Education bill that defines America.' Last week, we marked up bills to support the strength of America's infrastructure and the American jobs needed to build America, to repair America and to make America more competitive, innovative and resilient.

"Today, we are marking up the Labor-HHS-Education Bill, which supports American's human infrastructure. In other words, America's greatest asset – our people. This bill meets compelling human needs in areas such as healthcare, education and job training. That's why I made sure to give Chairman Harkin a robust allocation of \$165 billion. That's \$44 billion above the House allocation for the Labor-HHS bill. Without our topline of \$1.058 trillion, Senator Harkin's bill would look very different.

"How different? The House has yet to mark up its Labor-HHS bill, but we can compare the allocations. The Senate allocation for Labor-HHS is \$165 billion. The House allocation is \$122 billion. That's the level of the Labor-HHS bill from 2002. Since 2002, America has grown by more than 28 million people. We have two million more kids in school. A Labor-HHS bill at the 2002 level simply cannot meet the needs of the American people today.

"I fight so hard for this bill because the Labor-HHS-Education bill is such an important bill. It is the largest non-defense bill, and it funds so many important missions. But I want to focus on two specific missions that I think really represent why we need to move this bill out of Committee and to the Senate floor. I want to highlight the National Institutes of Health and Early Childhood Education and Care.

"The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is a world-class institution. I call it the National Institutes of Hope. It serves as the foundation for U.S. medical innovation, which employs one million U.S. citizens, generates \$84 billion in wages and salaries, and exports \$90 billion in goods and services. Because of the investments we have made in NIH over the past decades, we have cut the cancer death rate by 11 percent in women and 19 percent in men. Because of these investments, HIV/AIDS is no longer a death sentence, and polio and small pox are essentially eradicated in this country.

"These medical breakthroughs didn't just happen, they occurred because this Committee supported NIH, and the NIH supported dedicated scientists who sought knowledge and medical breakthroughs. We must keep up this support. That's why I made sure to give Chairman Harkin a robust allocation of \$165 billion, enough to fund NIH at the President's request level of \$30.9 billion, which is \$307 million above fiscal year 2013 enacted. I believe that investments in NIH are investments in health, in jobs and our economy, in our universities, and in our future.

"One other issue I'd like to highlight in this bill is the investment we make in early childhood education. What this bill does is give our next generation the greatest chance at success. It does so by investing in Head Start, a program that provides health, nutrition, and social services to children in low-income families from birth to age five. We fund Early Head Start, which helps mothers deliver healthy babies and then supports those babies up to the age of three. We increase funding for Child Care Development Block Grants that help lower income families afford child care for their children while parents are at work or school. And we fund universal Pre-K, which supports the President's initiative to ensure that every four year old in this country can attend preschool.

"Studies have shown that every one dollar invested in high-quality early childhood development programs provides society with a \$16 return on investment. Investing in children at a very young age is the right thing to do because America does not turn its back on the most vulnerable among us. And it helps our businesses by ensuring they have a qualified and productive workforce. It strengthens our economy by reducing crime, juvenile detention rates, and welfare use, and increasing high-school and college graduation rates, incomes and homeownership rates, all of these things helping our nation prosper in the future.

"I believe we must focus on reducing the public debt in a balanced way. But if that's all we do then we risk creating other deficits in areas such as medical research, healthcare, education, and access to child care. I believe Senator Harkin's bill strikes the right balance. That's why I'm fighting for \$1.058 trillion, a balanced solution to replace sequester, and \$165 billion for the Labor-HHS-Education bill. That's why we must move this bill out of Committee to the Senate floor."

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